

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR UNWINDING A NEEDLE PORTION

This application is a continuation of U.S. Utility Patent Application
No. 09/934,298, ^{Now Patent # 6,712,287.} filed on August 21, 2001, which is pending.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention relates to an apparatus and method for unwinding a needle portion. More specifically, the invention relates to an adapter configured to unwind a needle portion from a needle holder so that the needle can be deposited in a disposal container.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

10 Due to concerns regarding contamination and injury, it is desirable to have a safe and simple method of disposing used medical needles (e.g. syringes, sharps). Emphasis has been placed on designing containers (e.g. phlebotomy disposal containers) that isolate the previously disposed needles from the medical professional that uses the container. Further, efforts have been made to provide a disposal container which a medical professional can operate easily and conveniently.

15 A typical needle disposal system is illustrated in Figure 1 and is described in U.S. Patent No. 5,322,164 issued to Richardson et al., which is incorporated herein by reference for its teachings related to needle disposal systems. The disposal container 2 shown in Figure 1 includes a container body 4 and a lid 6. The lid 6 includes a skirt 8 which may be used to engage a top flange of container body 4 (not shown).